

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 and 57-119 are pending in the above-captioned patent application after this amendment. Claims 1-44 and 57-110 have been allowed. However, the Applicants respectfully request that Examiner review this amendment after Notice of Allowance in light of the RCE and the recently submitted Information Disclosure Statements.

The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-44 and 57-110 are patentable as previously filed. Further, the Applicants have added new claims 111-119 in order to more fully encompass what the Applicants regard as the present invention.

Support for new claims 111-119 can be found throughout the originally filed specification. In particular, support for new claims 111-119 can be found in the specification at page 6, lines 14-32, at page 7, lines 12-15, at page 11, line 28 through page 12, line 11, at page 15, line 3 through page 16, line 15, at page 19, lines 18-21, at page 20, line 29 through page 22, line 13, in Figures 1 and 1A, and in the originally filed claims.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment.

Reconsideration of the application and the new claims is respectfully requested in view of the above-recited amendments and the arguments set forth below.

New Claims

New claims 111-119 have been added by this amendment. These claims are of a slightly different scope than the previously pending claims. However, these claims are considered to be patentable over the prior art references.

More specifically, in contrast to the prior art references, new claim 111 of the present invention requires “(a)n exposure apparatus ... comprising: a stage that holds a reticle, the stage being movable relative to the optical device; a stage base that supports the stage; a base assembly; a first isolation system that secures the stage base to the base assembly, the first isolation system reducing the effect of vibration of the base assembly causing vibration on the stage base; and a second isolation system that secures the base assembly to the mounting base, the second isolation system reducing the effect of vibration of the mounting base causing vibration on the base assembly.”

These features are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, new claim 111 is considered to be patentable. Because new claims 112-117 depend directly or indirectly from new claim 111, they are also considered to be patentable.

Further, in contrast to the prior art references, new claim 118 of the present invention requires “(a)n exposure apparatus ... comprising: movable means for holding a reticle, the movable means being movable relative to the optical means; stage base means for supporting the movable means; base assembly means for supporting the stage base means; first isolation means for securing the stage base means to the base assembly means, the first isolation means reducing the effect of vibration of the base assembly means causing vibration on the stage base means; and second isolation means for securing the base assembly means to the mounting base means, the second isolation means reducing the effect of vibration of the mounting base means causing vibration on the base assembly means.”

These features are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, new claim 118 is considered to be patentable.

Additionally, in contrast to the prior art references, new claim 119 of the present invention requires “(a) device manufacturing method comprising the steps of: providing an optical device; providing a substrate stage that holds a substrate; providing a reticle stage

that holds a reticle, the reticle stage being movable relative to the optical device; supporting the reticle stage with a stage base; providing a base assembly; providing a mounting base; securing the stage base to the base assembly with a first isolation system, the first isolation system reducing the effect of vibration of the base assembly causing vibration on the stage base; securing the base assembly to the mounting base with a second isolation system, the second isolation system reducing the effect of vibration of the mounting base causing vibration on the base assembly; producing a relative movement between the optical device and the reticle; and exposing the substrate that is held by the substrate stage, by the optical device.”

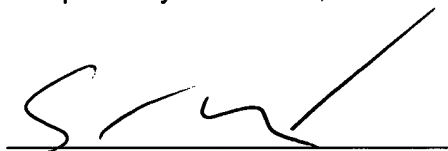
These features are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, new claim 119 is considered to be patentable.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-44 and 57-119 are patentable for the reasons set forth above, and that the application is now in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at 858-456-1951 for any reason that would advance the instant application to issue.

Dated this the 25th day of March, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Roeder', is written over a horizontal line.

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